

MEMORIAL
OF THE
AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION,

PRAYING

The rigorous enforcement of the laws for the suppression of the African slave-trade, and the enactment of such additional laws as may be necessary to put an end to that traffic.

JANUARY 25, 1860.—Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and ordered to be printed.

MEMORIAL to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

The memorial and petition of the American Missionary Association respectfully represents as follows:

That your memorialists are an incorporated body under the laws of the State of New York, and that they are engaged in propagating the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in the destitute portions of the Union, in foreign heathen lands, and elsewhere, by supporting missionaries, diffusing a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, establishing schools, and in all proper ways extending the blessings of civilization and Christianity. The association, however, is neither an ecclesiastical nor a denominational body, and is not supported by denominations as such; but by individual Christians, ministers of different denominations, and laymen.

Your memorialists further represent that they have for many years sustained a mission in western Africa, which has been productive of great good to the natives of that country, and to all who have come under its influence. There are, however, serious obstructions in the prosecution of the work. It is known to your memorialists, and to all who are conversant with the history of Africa, that one of the principal obstacles in the progress of civilization and the extension of Christianity in that country is the domestic slave-trade, which owes its origin and prevalence chiefly to the foreign slave-trade. This traffic introduces intoxicating drinks and instruments of cruelty and death, stirs up contention among the tribes, producing vast and desolating wars, and leads to the most debasing vices and crimes, so that it is a well-established fact that the excess of barbarism, on the western coast of Africa especially, is the effect of the foreign slave-trade, and that, in the interior, beyond the reach of that influence, the negroes are far more civilized, industrious, and peaceful.

Along the shores of Africa, wherever the foreign slave-trade is carried on, the natives form the worst and most wretched population of the whole continent. There is more drunkenness than elsewhere, greater cruelty, a lower morality, more crime, more misery of every kind, than is ever seen where the foreign slave-trade does not prevail; and it is the policy of the slave-traders to corrupt the natives by intoxicating drinks and other appliances, that they may have power over them, and that they may more successfully carry on their iniquitous traffic.

In view of these considerations, and of all that pertains to the welfare of the African tribes, and especially of those over which the association exerts a beneficial influence, your memorialists, in common with a large portion of the people of the United States, feel a deep concern at the recommencement, on the part of citizens of this country, of the African slave-trade. Cargoes of Africans have been brought into the country by American citizens in American ships, built and fitted out in these States, in defiance of the law, which stigmatizes such traffic as piracy, and against a treaty with a foreign power; and the unfortunate victims of this nefarious man-stealing have been sold, and, with their posterity, consigned to perpetual bondage.

This piratical and illegal trade—this inhuman invasion of the rights of men—this outrage on civilization and Christianity—this violation of the laws of God and man—is openly countenanced and encouraged by a portion of the citizens of some of the States of this Union; the perpetrators, who were taken *flagrante delicto*, have been acquitted on a jury trial; and citizens of this country are combining to reopen and carry on the foreign slave-trade, while a party is forming favorable to a repeal of the law that attaches a death-penalty to the crime—a law which was founded upon the broadest principles of philanthropy, religion, and humanity, and is in exact consonance with the divine law.

Your memorialists, as American citizens and as Christians, feel compelled, in view of the crime and sin alluded to, and their disastrous effects upon their mission in Africa, as well as upon their native country, most earnestly and respectfully to entreat your honorable bodies to cause the law of the land against the foreign slave-trade to be rigorously enforced, additional laws to be enacted, if necessary, to insure the conviction and punishment of pirates who may be engaged in the foreign slave-trade, that the honor of the nation may be preserved, treaty obligations fulfilled, and the country saved from the disgrace of renewing a traffic held in abhorrence by the civilized world, and from the displeasure of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe.

The cause of missions is dear to the hearts of the Christian people of this country, and they look to the constituted authorities with deep anxiety at the present crisis; they have a deep sense of the solemnity of the obligations which treaties, superadded to the claims of natural justice, have imposed on the government of this country; and they justly apprehend the continued displeasure of the Great Ruler of Nations if a traffic so abhorred of God and man is suffered to exist.

It is their prayer, and the prayer of your memorialists, that the

blessings of Almighty God may rest upon the Congress of the United States, and that He will so enlighten the minds and guide the deliberations of those who are called into the councils of the nation, that the faith and honor of the people and their government should be preserved, all portions of their fellow-citizens saved from the guilt of piratical depredations upon the unoffending inhabitants of a distant continent, and the judgments of an incensed God be averted from their beloved land. And, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

DAVID THURSTON,

President of the American Missionary Association.

GEORGE WHIPPLE,

S. S. JOCELYN,

Secretaries.

NEW YORK, *December 2, 1859.*

